Two Kinds of Wisdom

Lesson Scripture: James 3:13-18; 5:7-12
Focus Scripture: James 3:13-18; 5:7-12

Key Verse: The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. James 3:17 (NRSV)

JAMES 3:13-18; 5:7-12 (NRSV)

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth.

15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish.

16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

5:7-12

7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of

JAMES 3:13-18; 5:7-12 (KJV)

James 3:13-18

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

5:7-12

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job,

Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

12 Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

KEY TERMS

- **Understanding** – Thoroughly knowledgeable.
- **Disorder** – Out of control.
- **Peaceable** – Wholeness from discerning the Lord's will and obeying it.
- **Selfish Ambition** – Self-seeking.
- **Pure** – Uncontaminated, not mixed with guilt or anything condemnable.
- **Grumble** – To groan because of pressure of being exerted forward.

INTRODUCTION

"Who is wise and understanding among you?"

It is easy to turn to friends and family for advice when we are facing conflict or difficult situations or decisions. When dealing with family issues, one might turn to a mutual family member or someone outside the family for help. The same can be said for friendships. Furthermore, one may even seek out professional help when problems mount and seem too much to handle.

It is a problem, though, when we begin to rely more on the advice of those around us than of God…

Whom we turn to depends greatly on our relationship with the person(s). Because of the strength and length of the relationships, we know whom to turn to and in what circumstances. The more we trust them, the more we share with and depend on them for advice, which is usually not a problem. It is a problem, though, when we begin to rely more on the advice of those around us than of God, and their advice leads to disorder and chaos. In this lesson, we will look at the two kinds of wisdom and learn how to

decipher between spiritual wisdom and earthly wisdom.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

"Two Kinds of Wisdom"

At the time of this letter in James 3, the people are dealing with really contentious times. There are teachers among them who are giving instructions, and there are other leaders doing the same. Some of what is being said is beneficial while the remainder is causing more harm. Because the tongue is such a powerful weapon, conflicts are arising, and the people do not know how to respond.

In addition to advising people to watch what they say and how, James provides distinguishing markers to help them identify the source of the wisdom they are receiving. If there is chaos and sin, then one can conclude that the advice was not from God. If there is peace, gentleness, evidence of the *Fruit of the Spirit* and mercy, then the wisdom received is from God. They are to seek after and model their own words after those from God.

> These people are to prepare their hearts and position themselves to extend compassion and mercy to their neighbors.

In addition, like Job, they are to remain patient during these times of contention. These people are to prepare their hearts and position themselves to extend compassion and mercy to their neighbors. It is through these actions that their righteousness will shine.

SANKOFA

To learn how those before us handled two kinds of wisdom, we only have to look at our immediate past and see the countless times where warring ideas caused discourse among us. Dr. King and Malcolm X are two such representations. W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington offer yet another example, as do Rev. Dr. James H. Cone and his brother, Rev. Dr. Cecil Cone.

Countless times throughout history, we see persons on opposite sides of opinion. Their path to seeing the fruition of their ideas was often contentious. For us, our intent is mostly the same: to have discourse and voice our ideas, with a path to action. History is laden with persons who demonstrated extraordinary wisdom

and courage, whose deeds are now emulated and names universally known.

Is it possible to be on the opposite side but still want the same results? Do differing messages affect the end goal? Can God reside and speak into and through both sides?

CASE STUDY

The media is flooded with a variety of shows offering advice, wisdom, and guidance. Personalities and spiritual leaders offer listeners and viewers tips on living their best life, strategies in identifying their passions, and insight into dealing with difficult situations. People consider them as wise, all knowing, and seek them out for help. These "gurus" become the go-to persons for when life is going down a rocky path, or hits rock bottom. For some, these personalities are like their savior, messengers sent from God to bring healing, restoration, and reconciliation to others. So much so that they buy the books, pay for and participate in their online courses, travel across the country to register for conferences, and attend meet-and-greets. Nevertheless, as much as these gurus help, their work and words put them under fire as well. There are those who doubt them. They believe these persons only put out that which draws people in for their own selfish gain. People critique their movements and denounce their teachings. They do not believe that their insights or messages come from God and do more to lead people astray than to actually help. Their biggest argument? People will search everywhere for wisdom but will not seek the Bible.

How can we tell if the wisdom we hear and read in sources other the Bible is from God or from the world?

LIFE APPLICATION

"What's the Difference?"

Using the previous passages, identify ways you can tell spiritual wisdom from earthly wisdom. Cite the book, chapter, and verse.

Spiritual Wisdom...

Earthly Wisdom...

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the value of acting with wisdom from above and with patience in the midst of trials.
2. How will you embrace wisdom from God and seek to demonstrate it consistently and patiently?
3. What are some of the ways we can distinguish godly wisdom from earthly wisdom?

> These people are to prepare their hearts and position themselves to extend compassion and mercy to their neighbors.

CLOSING DEVOTION

God, we have spent the last thirteen weeks learning about the value, the call, and the gifts of wisdom. Through Proverbs, Jesus' ministry, and the book of James, we learned how to implement wisdom, and what to expect when we seek your wisdom above all else. Now we ask that those things we have meditated on be acceptable in your sight, that we not forget what we have learned, but we continue to walk, act, think, feel, and believe in your wisdom. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. AMEN!

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

August 24 – August 30

Monday	Matthew 24:3-14 (Wisdom About End Time Signs)
Tuesday	Jeremiah 38:1-6 (Wisdom for Speaking a Prophetic Message)
Wednesday	1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 (Wisdom in Knowing Hearts Without Blame)
Thursday	Matthew 5:33-37 (Wisdom in Speaking Clearly)
Friday	1 Peter 4:7-11 (Living Gracefully with One Another)
Saturday	James 5:13-20 (Wisdom in the Prayer of Faith)
Sunday	James 3:13-18; 5:7-12 (Acting Wisely with Patience and Love)

DECALOGUE

Superintendent—And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord hath made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

My soul be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise:
And hosts of sins are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

Superintendent—Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not kill.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not commit adultery.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not steal.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Superintendent—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

School—Lord, have mercy upon us, and write these laws upon our hearts.

Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee!
Nearer to thee!

Superintendent—Hear what Christ, our Savior, saith: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.